Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation makes $40 million transformative grant to further multiple myeloma research at Dana-Farber

Paula and Rodger Riney of St. Louis, through the Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation, have made a $40 million grant to support multiple myeloma research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The grant represents the largest single award supporting multiple myeloma research in Dana-Farber’s history. The Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation has been a strong supporter of Dana-Farber and with this grant has cumulatively awarded nearly $60 million to the Institute.

Multiple myeloma is a challenging cancer that forms in a type of white blood cell called a plasma cell. Dana-Farber has been at the forefront of multiple myeloma therapies over the past two decades, helping to convert myeloma from a fatal disease to a chronic condition for many patients. However, therapeutic resistance and drug-related toxicities continue to take a toll on many patients, underscoring the need for innovative treatments.

“The path to developing new treatments for multiple myeloma is through rigorous research,” said Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, president and CEO of Dana-Farber and the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine. “The most effective way to spur that research is in supporting the scientists doing the complex work. The Riney Family are generous and stalwart supporters, and through this grant and their previous support they continue to make a profound impact on scientific discovery and clinical care. Their leadership will help patients at Dana-Farber and around the world.”

“My own journey as a myeloma patient—and knowing how many others are also living with this disease—has led us to seek out the individuals, teams, and organizations that are on the leading edge of research,” said Rodger Riney. “There is no time to waste in the pursuit of better understanding, treatment, and cures.”

Accelerating translational research

This new $40 million grant builds upon ongoing work and will deepen and expand approaches for addressing the most complex challenges in myeloma research and improving patient care. Specifically, this grant will:

• Renew support for preclinical experiments to identify novel targets and develop new medicines and immune-based therapies for patients;

• Fund clinical research designed to test novel myeloma therapies, alone and in combination with standard and experimental treatments, to improve patient outcomes; and,

• Support co-location of myeloma labs at Dana-Farber to facilitate greater cohesion and collaboration among members of the research team.

“I extend my heartfelt thanks to Paula and Rodger Riney for their unprecedented support of our research to develop novel treatments for multiple myeloma,” said Ken Anderson, MD, program director at Dana-Farber’s Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center and LeBow Institute for Myeloma Therapeutics and the Kraft Family Professor of Medicine. “This very generous grant will fast-forward our translation of basic discoveries to clinical trials, ultimately providing innovative treatments for patients and their families.”

Anderson will lead the research efforts supported by this grant in close partnership with Nikhil Munshi, MD, director of basic and correlative science at the Lipper Center and the Kraft Family Chair at Dana-Farber. The grant will also provide support for clinical work led by Paul Richardson, MD, clinical program leader and director of

Continued on page 17
Dear Friends,

I want to start by taking a moment to extend my sincere thanks to all of you. It has been one year since we announced The Dana-Farber Campaign, and in that time, all of us at the Institute have been humbled by and immensely grateful for the outpouring of support from our generous donors. That generosity is vital to us achieving our ambitious goals, and will continue to be in the years ahead as we strive to overcome major challenges in cancer science and care and, ultimately, offer better solutions for every patient.

Cancer is personal. Every story you read in this newsletter is personal—there is a loved one, a community leader, a colleague, a friend, behind each gift to Dana-Farber. So often donors tell me that the reason they give to Dana-Farber is because of the personal relationships forged here between patients and their clinicians, between family members and researchers tackling the big questions that could save the next patient. When people talk about Dana-Farber being an extraordinary place, what comes to mind is the exceptional people behind those microscopes, the people in those exam rooms, working together to save the next patient’s life.

This is why I feel so fortunate to be a part of this institution and community. Looking around at the work we do here at Dana-Farber, I see firsthand the compassion, expertise, and relentless dedication of people who are ready and willing to help. And during a time when the generosity of others has never meant more, we are deeply grateful for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,

Melany N. Duval
Senior Vice President and Chief Philanthropy Officer

Dana-Farber is pursuing an ambitious, multi-year fundraising effort to change the future of cancer research and care: The Dana-Farber Campaign. This $2 billion campaign is the largest in the Institute’s history and one of the largest ever in the U.S. focused solely on cancer. Our community of support is crucial to this effort. Philanthropy through The Dana-Farber Campaign is accelerating the Institute’s strategic priorities by supporting revolutionary science, extraordinary care, exceptional expertise, and essential opportunities—helping us prevent, treat, and Defy Cancer.

Nursing and Clinical Programs are critical priorities of The Dana-Farber Campaign. We aspire to build on our strong legacy of innovative and compassionate care and develop new, patient-centered solutions that change the way cancer care is delivered. Gifts to support nursing and clinical programs allow us to test novel ideas, incorporate new technologies and nursing science into the care we provide, and improve health equity by expanding patient assistance and diversifying our teams.

At Dana-Farber, patients are at the heart of everything we do and we are ever-determined to deliver better solutions for every patient. Together, we can change the future of patient-centered cancer care.

To learn more, visit DefyCancer.org

THE DANA-FARBER CAMPAIGN: UPDATE

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute marks 75 years of impact

On March 30, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute launched a year-long commemoration of our founding by Sidney Farber, MD, 75 years ago in 1947. So much of our vast history of progress in transformative cancer research and care has been made possible by our generous community of support.

"From the first remissions with chemotherapy in 1947 to the most recent new immunotherapies, Dana-Farber has helped push progress against cancer for patients everywhere," said Dana-Farber President and CEO Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine. "We celebrate the rich history this anniversary represents, even as we rededicate ourselves to relieve the burden of cancer in the years ahead."

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu issued a City of Boston Proclamation declaring March 30, 2022, as Dana-Farber Cancer Institute Day, and the Institute launched a dedicated web hub at Dana-Farber.org/75 to showcase anniversary-related content.

The milestone commemoration continues with celebratory banners in the Longwood Medical Area, social media posts, a Voices of History video project, and events to be announced throughout the year.

“Our work over many decades has been marked by an incredible community of scientists, clinicians, nurses, staff, and volunteers, all working together with our patients and families for the best possible outcome today and tomorrow,” said Josh Bekenstein, chairman of the Board of Trustees. “We are grateful for their efforts and dedication to the mission we all share.”

History

In 1947, Sidney Farber, MD, founded the Children’s Cancer Research Foundation, dedicated to providing compassionate, state-of-the-art treatment to children with cancer while developing the cancer preventatives, treatments, and cures of the future. The foundation officially expanded its programs to include patients of all ages in 1969, and in 1974 became known as the Sidney Farber Cancer Center in honor of its founder. The long-term philanthropic support of the Charles A. Dana Foundation was acknowledged in 1983 by incorporating the benefactor’s name into our present name, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Throughout its history, Dana-Farber researchers and physicians have contributed seminal breakthroughs in both the understanding of cancer biology and the treatment of the disease across all types of cancer. Groundbreaking advances in precision medicine, immunotherapy, data science, and drug development, along with the first program in social work, the first Patient and Family Advisory Council, and other vital components of our signature Total Patient Care model, continue to set standards for cancer science and medicine and to serve as a beacon of hope for patients and families around the world.

The Dana-Farber and Jimmy Fund community looks forward to continuing the commemorations in 2023, with the 75th anniversary of the Jimmy Fund’s founding in May 1948.
Lunder Family Chair in Leukemia at Dana-Farber honors an indelible bond

Gifts to endow faculty chairs are a priority of The Dana-Farber Campaign because they help Dana-Farber recruit and retain the very best senior-level investigators who consistently demonstrate excellence in the practice and teaching of cancer medicine.

In 2022, in honor of a decades-long friendship, Peter and Paula Lunder, through The Lunder Foundation of Portland, Maine, made a $5 million gift to establish the Lunder Family Chair in Leukemia at Dana-Farber, and to provide additional resources to the Lunder Leukemia Research Fund, an endowed fund established by the family in 2008. Richard Stone, MD, director of Translational Research in the Division of Leukemia in the Department of Medical Oncology and Dana-Farber’s chief of staff, is the first incumbent of the chair, which will ultimately be renamed the Richard M. Stone, MD, Chair in Leukemia at Dana-Farber following his retirement at a future date. Stone also oversees the Lunder Leukemia Research Fund.

“Holding this chair is one of the greatest honors of my professional career,” said Stone. “Even more so, that it was made possible by the Lunder Family, whom I have known and whose friendship I have treasured since childhood, has truly touched my heart.”

Stone has been a leader at Dana-Farber for over 25 years and his contributions, including his research into developmental therapeutics for blood cancer patients, are well-recognized by the medical community. Under his direction, the Division of Leukemia has become an international leader in understanding and treating the disease. Among his many achievements, he led the charge to develop five new drugs for acute myeloid leukemia (AML) that were approved in recent years. In particular, Stone’s team developed the drugs midostaurin and venetoclax, which have been groundbreaking in the treatment of AML and other hematologic malignancies. Midostaurin plus chemotherapy was shown to significantly improve survival in patients ages 18 to 59 with FLT3 mutated AML, and venetoclax is the first in a new class of drugs that target cancer cells’ prosurvival proteins. Beyond his tremendous and prolific research, he is also deeply dedicated to teaching and mentoring the next generation of students, residents, and fellows.

“In considering how we wanted to support The Dana-Farber Campaign, there was very little question for us about the best way to do that. We were pleased to create a faculty chair that would support Richard’s work today and ultimately carry his name.”

— PETER & PAULA LUNDER

World-Leader in Leukemia

Dana-Farber’s Division of Leukemia is one of the largest and most accomplished in the world. From the Institute’s earliest days pioneering treatments for childhood leukemia, Dana-Farber’s physician-scientists are relentlessly dedicated to translating their laboratory findings into new therapies through novel clinical trials, with the goal of improving outcomes for patients of all ages, with all types of leukemia, including the most rare, aggressive, and difficult-to-treat forms of the disease. Their efforts guide treatment protocols today and help to shape the future of leukemia research and care for patients and families worldwide.

First New Treatment Approved for AML in 25 years

A targeted drug whose clinical testing was led by Dana-Farber’s Richard Stone, MD, was the first new treatment for newly diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia (AML) in more than 25 years.

The drug, midostaurin, was approved by the FDA as a combination treatment with chemotherapy, for adult patients newly diagnosed with AML that carries a mutation in the gene FLT3. Such patients account for roughly a third of the 21,000 Americans diagnosed annually with this rare and aggressive disease of the bone and blood marrow.

The FLT3 gene mutation can result in faster progression of the disease, higher relapse rates, and lower survival rates than other forms of AML. Patients in the trial who were treated with midostaurin plus chemotherapy lived significantly longer and had a 23% lower risk of death than those treated with chemotherapy alone.

“The availability of midostaurin now helps to establish a new standard of care for this high-risk patient population,” said Stone.
Fireman Family gift of $2.5 million drives development of symptom management platform

Symptom management is a critical, yet often overlooked, facet of the cancer experience. This reality, along with the extraordinary care and revolutionary science taking place at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, inspired the Fireman Family to make a generous gift of $2.5 million from the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation. This gift to the Institute will support the development of a symptom management platform that will greatly ease the burden of cancer and its treatment for patients. By leveraging Dana-Farber’s existing knowledge and resources in this area, cross-team experts will create a next-generation, evidence-based symptom management solution that will use a patient-centric model to enhance clinicians’ ability to preemptively address and effectively treat the symptoms of cancer. The Fireman Family is committed to helping Dana-Farber improve patient care. Nausea, pain, and other symptoms can be debilitating for patients, increasing emergency room visits and hospital stays, and driving higher costs and lower quality of life. Dana-Farber’s symptom management platform will address these issues by combining expert guidance with technology-based protocols to support patients, clinical teams, and caregivers through the cancer journey. Ultimately, it will improve outcomes and transform the care experience for patients. Paul and Phyllis Fireman have supported Dana-Farber for many years, along with their children, Stephanie and Adam Rogers, Lori and Denny Baldwin, and Dan and Penny Fireman. Past gifts from the family have gone to the Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living; research in lung cancer, leukemia, and sarcoma; and many more exceptional projects. Most recently, they were inspired to work with Dana-Farber President and CEO Laurie H. Glaccum, MD, and Dana-Farber staff to drive this project forward. “Our family is honored to be able to support one of the key pillars of Dana-Farber’s mission—patient care,” said Paul and Phyllis Fireman. “We hope this gift will lead to novel approaches to care that will improve the quality of life for patients.”

Adam Reich, vice president of Business Initiatives and Alliances; Michael Hassert, MD, MPH, chief quality officer; and Terri Jabaley, PhD, RN, OCN, clinical inquiry specialist for the Phyllis F. Cantor Center for Research in Nursing and Patient Care Services, will work together with patients and care teams to develop the platform, which will be a central place for symptom reporting and tracking, education, and clinical decision support. This tool will give patients more control of their treatment, help doctors and nurses work more efficiently, and ultimately reduce cost of care and unnecessary hospital visits. The Fireman Family is also excited about the unique opportunity of this gift to create lasting impact and funding for Dana-Farber for years to come. “I am excited and grateful for this wonderful commitment from the Fireman Family,” said Glaccum, who is also the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine. “This gift will ultimately benefit so many in our patient community at Dana-Farber, and patients with cancer being treated around the world.”

Grant enhances patient-centered communication

The National Palliative Care Research Center (NPCRC) is committed to strengthening, growing, and supporting the community of palliative care research scientists and stimulating expanded research and innovation. Dana-Farber is a pioneer in the field of palliative care and is equally committed to enhancing research and care efforts in this area. NPCRC recently awarded nearly $200,000 to Rachel Pozzar, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, of the Phyllis F. Cantor Center for Research in Nursing and Patient Care Services at Dana-Farber. Pozzar is refining a patient-centered approach to setting the visit agenda and streamlining communication between patients with advanced ovarian cancer and their clinicians. Research has shown that when clinicians elicit and respond to patients’ needs, preferences, concerns, and emotions, patients experience better quality of life during treatment. “We know that patient-centered communication is beneficial to patients’ quality of life, but so far, interventions to improve communication in the gynecologic cancer care setting have been limited,” said Pozzar. “Patients with advanced ovarian cancer experience a complex array of physical symptoms and bear a disproportionately high burden of psychological distress. NPCRC’s funding is essential to creating a novel, scalable approach to promoting patient-centered communication and improving the experiences of these patients.”

NPCRC is thrilled to provide this funding to Rachel Pozzar at Dana-Farber, said R. Sean Morrison, director of NPCRC. “Her research is precisely the kind of evidence-based work that we at NPCRC believe will improve the quality of life for patients and families living with serious illness.”

PMC Winter Cycle

The PMC Winter Cycle, the first-ever stationary cycling event to be held at historic Fenway Park, raised $480,000 toward the PMC’s $66 million goal. Nearly 450 riders enjoyed the view of the field from Fenway’s fifth floor concourses or participated virtually while powering to high-energy sessions with top instructors from Backyard Boston, B/SPOKE, CycleBar Assembly Row, EverybodyFights, Reldr, The Handle Bar, and Turnstyle Cycle. Pictured above: Rachael Shuler, RN, OCN, clinical inquiry specialist in the Prevention, Nursing and Patient Care Center at Dana-Farber, Briana de la Garza (far left), director of EverybodyFights, Bekah Salwasser (far right) and foundation colleagues at the 2022 event. The PMC is the largest single athletic fundraising event in the nation and is Dana-Farber’s largest single contributor, accounting for 55% of the Jimmy Fund’s annual revenue.
Roths give $1 million to multiple myeloma research fellowships

Since 2013, Neal and Vicki Roths have funded remarkable progress in multiple myeloma research under the leadership of Kenneth Anderson, MD, program director of Dana-Farber’s Jerome Lipper Center for Multiple Myeloma and LeBow Institute for Myeloma Therapeutics, and the Kraft Family Professor of Medicine. Now, through a gift of $1 million providing additional support to the Vicki and Neal Roth Fellowship for Multiple Myeloma Research, the Roths have underscored their commitment to transforming the prognosis for multiple myeloma patients at Dana-Farber and around the world.

Due in no small part to Anderson and his colleagues at Dana-Farber, the outlook for patients with multiple myeloma has improved dramatically over the past two decades. Anderson’s work led to the development of bortezomib, which was the first new myeloma medicine in more than 30 years when it was approved by the FDA in 2003. Anderson and his team have led the way in developing almost all of the 15 medicines approved for myeloma today, enabling many patients to live three to five times longer than they did before the approval of bortezomib.

There is, however, still work to be done. Over time, myeloma cells grow impervious to even the most potent medicines, causing disease relapse. Moreover, some myeloma subtypes do not respond well to standard treatments. Through the Roth Fellowship for Multiple Myeloma Research, under Anderson’s direction, physician-scientists at the Lipper Center are confronting these challenges head on. The Roths’ recent gift will sponsor five fellows as they pursue investigations aimed at answering the most critical questions regarding the biology and treatment of myeloma. The inaugural Roth Fellow, Liang Lin, PhD, demonstrated the lifesaving work that is possible with this support. Among other points of progress, Lin advanced the development of an antibody-drug conjugate, a new type of medicine for myeloma, toward clinical trials. Investments in developing this type of expertise and in advancing new treatments and prevention are critical priorities of The Dana-Farber Campaign.

The Roths believe in the continued impact that the fellows will have in myeloma research. “The Roth Fellows, with Dr. Anderson as their mentor, have the power to change the course of this disease,” said Neal. “Their work is essential to creating a world in which myeloma is not only treatable, but preventable.”

Anderson, who has built a relationship with the Roths over the past nine years, looks forward to extending the pipeline of promising new treatment strategies with their support and building the next generation of leaders for myeloma research. “Vicki and Neal have been tremendous partners in the progress we have made in myeloma research and treatment,” Anderson said. “With this generous gift, our team will build upon these achievements in the years ahead.”

In honor of Anderson’s work, the Roths have also contributed an ink print by Frank Grisdale entitled “Sweet Fields, Study No. 2, 2008,” which will be displayed at the Yawkey Center for Cancer Care.

Foundation supports equity, research, and total patient care

The Crystal Family Charitable Foundation, established in memory of former Dana-Farber patient Rona Crystal, renewed their steadfast support of the Institute with an increased gift of $150,000 to an array of high priority program areas. The foundation’s commitment enables Kira Bona, MD, MPH, to embed a health equity intervention in a multi-center pediatric clinical trial. Their generosity will also aid the Cancer Care Equity Program’s (CCEP) efforts to increase enrollment of underrepresented minorities in genomics-based clinical trials under the direction of Christopher Lathan, MD, MS, MPH, chief clinical access and equity officer, CCEP founding director, and the Hadley Family Chair at Dana-Farber.

Funding was also awarded to Dana-Farber’s Sibling Program, led by Larissa Hewitt, LICSW, which provides support for families of pediatric patients, and to the Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living, led by Jennifer Ligibel, MD, two initiatives emblematic of Dana-Farber’s signature Total Patient Care model.

Finally, the foundation is advancing critical research into new treatments for lymphoma and ovarian cancer, led by Philippe Armand, MD, PhD, chief of the Division of Lymphoma and the Harold and Virginia Lash Endowed Chair in Lymphoma Research at Dana-Farber, and Sarah Hill, MD, PhD, respectively.

Rona Crystal’s long-time friends, Paul Feinberg and Susan Dunham, serve as trustees of the foundation. “Rona loved cruises and meeting new people. When she was in treatment for ovarian cancer in Dana-Farber, Rona felt very supported by her care team. Before her passing, Rona made her wishes known that she wanted to help those in need. We are proud to continue her legacy by funding such important programs at Dana-Farber.”

Sandi Godfrey’s generosity addresses GVHD

Sandi Godfrey and her husband, Bob, heroically took on two fights, first against Bob’s leukemia and, subsequently, his painful battle with chronic graft-versus-host disease (cGVHD), a side effect after stem cell transplant caused when the transplanted cells reacted against his body. Bob’s doctor, Vincent Ho, MD, director of Clinical Operations, Stem Cell Transplantation at Dana-Farber, partnered with the Godfreys, ensuring Bob accessed the latest treatment strategies.

Sadly, cGVHD and its complications ultimately took Bob’s life in 2020. “If it wasn’t for GVHD, Bob would have had a normal life,” Sandi recalled. “It made me mad.” She turned that emotion into action. Her gift of $100,000 establishing the Robert Godfrey Memorial Fund for Graft-Versus-Host Disease Research supports the work of Ho and Dana-Farber in the effort to solve cGVHD.

For sufferers of GVHD, Ho said, “the landscape has changed in the last few years.” For instance, Dana-Farber had a leading role in the development and clinical trials of belimumab, the first drug developed specifically for cGVHD to be approved by the FDA, and since then the FDA has approved two additional cGVHD drugs. The fund supports Dana-Farber’s mission and research ensuring that patients cured after transplant lead fulfilling lives without cGVHD.

For Sandi, these advances are welcomed, if bittersweet. “If no other family has to face the pain Bob did with GVHD, then I would be so glad,” she said.

10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission
Sherwoods establish endowed fellowship in enduring commitment to Dana-Farber

Supporting Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is a lifelong commitment for Emily and Ned Sherwood. Sitting in their sunny Florida home, Emily Sherwood fondly shared recollections of her sister, Daryl Elizabeth Layzer, “a very bright, motivated person who worked throughout her illness. Her life was cut short, too early. She had a lot more to give.”

In her memory, the Ned & Emily Sherwood Family Foundation established the Daryl Elizabeth Layzer Endowed Fellowship at Dana-Farber with a gift of $1 million. The fellowship furthers research in multiple myeloma under the direction of Kenneth Anderson, MD, program director of the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center and LeBow Institute for Myeloma Therapeutics and the Kraft Family Professor of Medicine. He was also Daryl’s physician. The endowment will specifically fund the work of a fellow selected annually by Anderson.

Investment in talent is one of the most important ways to accelerate scientific discovery, and the Sherwoods have long known that support of “human capital” is key to keeping Dana-Farber at the forefront of cancer medicine. “We have been giving to further Ken’s multiple myeloma research since 1998,” said Ned Sherwood. Their ongoing contributions, in tribute to Daryl, have focused on advancing multiple myeloma research and talented fellows under Anderson’s tutelage. Building on their long legacy of generosity to Dana-Farber, this permanent fund will support generations to come. “Years ago, we started working with Ken to help defray costs of a promising researcher, and we’ve been fortunate to support fellows over the years. We are delighted to endow our support to ensure that important advances in myeloma research and care continue generation after generation.”

Colatosti Family hopes to aid fellow Vietnam veterans with MCL gift

Tom and Nancy Colatosti recently made a gift of $250,000 to establish the Colatosti Family Fund for Lymphoma Research to support the research of Mark Murakami, MD, in mantle cell lymphoma (MCL). With this generous funding, Murakami will work with Ann LaCasce, MD, MMSc, director of the Dana-Farber/Mass General Brigham Fellowship in Hematology/Oncology and the Fellowship Program in Hematology/Oncology at Dana-Farber, to better understand how MCL responds to a new combination of targeted oral medications.

Tom first met LaCasce when he was diagnosed with MCL in 2019. “When I learned Dana-Farber was doing clinical trials on MCL treatments, I thought there was no better thing I could do than to use my resources to help underserved Vietnam veterans who may be affected by Agent Orange–originated lymphomas,” said Tom. “It is an honor and privilege for me to support leading MCL research at Dana-Farber.”

“The Colatosti support ensures the future progress of MCL therapies. I am truly grateful for their investment in this important research,” said Murakami. “Their generosity will help future patients get the best care possible,” added LaCasce. “Many thanks to Tom and Nancy.”

Ramsey Family establishes research fund for Richter’s transformation

In spring 2021, Duane Ramsey lost his wife, Wendy, to chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and Richter’s transformation—the rapid transformation of CLL into a significantly more aggressive lymphoma with a poor prognosis. He and his sons, Spencer and Stewart, were inspired to continue her mission to spread awareness and advocate for cancer research by making a $110,000 gift to establish the Wendy Ramsey Richter’s Research Fund at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

This fund supports the research of Matthew Davids, MD, MMSc, director of clinical research in the Division of Lymphoma at Dana-Farber. “It hit home for me when I read of his successes and learned he was involved in developing the venetoclax drug, which was part of Wendy’s treatment plan,” said Duane. “We learned very quickly that Dr. Davids sees, from his patients, the desperate need to uncover new treatment options and he uses that to drive his relentless pursuit for progress in the lab. It made our decision easy.”

The Ramseys are hopeful that their gift will help Davids develop novel therapeutics to benefit patients and families. “Any type of progress will be a win,” said Spencer. “We felt that in real ways with Mom—each treatment or trial gave us more time with her, and we hope we can provide the same opportunity to patients and families in a similar situation,” added Stewart.

Impact | SUMMER 2022
The V Foundation for Cancer Research, which was founded in 1993 by ESPN and legendary basketball coach Jim Valvano to fund cancer research, has awarded three Dana-Farber scientists grants totaling $1 million to study various aspects of cancer development.

With a foundation Translational Grant, Irene Ghobrial, MD, director of the Clinical Investigator Research Program and a Lavine Family Chair for Preventative Cancer Therapies at Dana-Farber, is defining the role of the immune microenvironment in multiple myeloma precursor conditions.

Multiple myeloma is often preceded by asymptomatic precursor conditions that can progress into overt disease; however, there are no effective therapies to prevent disease progression, and most patients do not receive treatment until they actually develop cancer.

In order to treat patients before they become symptomatic, Ghobrial’s study aims to reveal immune biomarkers that predict disease progression and identify patients who will likely progress early. She and her colleagues are examining how patients’ immune systems change in response to treatments that target immune cells. These studies will support the development of new treatments that may slow or altogether stop progression of precursor conditions.

“The current standard of care for patients with myeloma precipitators is to ‘watch and wait’ until they progress to advanced-stage disease, at which point they may already suffer irreversible effects from the disease,” said Ghobrial. “I am grateful for the V Foundation’s support of our efforts to develop novel immunotherapies to stop these precursors from ever becoming active myeloma.”

In addition, Volker Hovestadt, PhD, and Amy Si-Ying Lee, PhD, each received V Scholar Grants from the foundation, which support young faculty early in their research careers.

Hovestadt is using genomic and computational techniques to study microRNAs—small molecules that bind to messenger RNA and block it from making proteins—across different types of childhood brain cancers.

His research may result in a better understanding of how microRNAs cause brain cancers and lead to better treatments for children with these tumors.

Lee’s work focuses on how translation, the process by which genetic material is converted from RNA into proteins, is regulated in cancer cells. She is studying a protein complex known as eIF3, which is overexpressed in several cancers and leads to poor prognosis, to determine whether it contributes to the translation of cancer-causing proteins and evaluate its potential as a therapeutic target.

“From increasing our understanding of cancer biology to targeted therapies, these projects show immense potential to make a significant impact in the cancer space. We applaud these scientists at Dana-Farber and are proud to work with them to save lives and create hope for patients,” said V Foundation CEO Shane Jacobson.

V Foundation grants support studies on cancer development

Kaplans support first North American clinical trials network for Waldenström’s

When Eric Kaplan was first diagnosed with Waldenström’s macroglobulinemia (WM), his local hematologist was forthright about the rarity of the disease and that he had seen fewer than 20 cases in his entire career. He encouraged Kaplan to seek a second opinion at Dana-Farber’s Bing Center for Waldenström’s Macroglobulinemia, and it was there that Kaplan received the treatment that changed his life.

“Because of my participation in a clinical trial, I am hopeful that I will see my 2-year-old grandson, Eli, graduate high school,” said Kaplan. “Just a year ago, seeing Eli graduate kindergarten was only as far out as I felt comfortable discussing.”

Kaplan and his wife, Harriet, want other WM patients to enjoy their own family milestones. They made a generous gift of corporate bonds, valued at $300,000, to support the launch of the WM Clinical Trials Network (WMCTN), which will be the first North American network of physician-scientists dedicated to WM trials. The Kaplans are also working to galvanize support from other WM hinders, including other patients and their loved ones.

Steven Teon, MD, PhD, director of the Bing Center, and Jorge Casillo, MD, the center’s clinical director, are hopeful that WMCTN will ensure that WM patients are able to access trials closer to home, while accelerating the development of more durable treatments.

“This clinical trials network brings together a permanent brain trust of renowned experts devoted to WM,” said Teon. “Jorge and I are deeply grateful to the Kaplans for their support of this important initiative.”

Leukemia Research Foundation aims to fight AML using CAR T-cell therapy

Acute myeloid leukemia (AML), the most common leukemia in adults and the second in children, is a highly dangerous disease. The Leukemia Research Foundation is dedicated to conquering blood cancers like AML by funding research into their causes and cures, as well as enriching the quality of life of those touched by these diseases, with the goal of accelerating the development of new treatments.

At Dana-Farber, Pietro Genovese, PhD, is leveraging his $100,000 grant from the Leukemia Research Foundation to help bring one of today’s most innovative new treatment options, CAR T-cell therapy, to patients with AML. CAR T-cell therapy is a revolutionary immunotherapy that alters a patient’s own T cells so that they can identify and attack only the patient’s cancer and leave healthy cells alone.

Although CAR T-cell therapy has shown efficacy in other diseases, leukemia cells and normal bone marrow stem cells lack targets that allow the treatment to tell them apart—and so the treatment is currently not precise enough to be effective. Genovese aims to modify normal bone marrow stem cells to make them resistant to such therapies, allowing these drugs to be used without the risk of damaging healthy tissues.

“Dr. Genovese’s innovative research project has the potential to lead to better treatments—and maybe even a cure—for hard-to-treat leukemias like AML,” said Kevin Radelet, executive director at the Leukemia Research Foundation. “Supporting researchers and partnering with prestigious institutions like Dana-Farber is critical to our vision of a world without blood cancers. We are proud to do so and grateful to our donors who make it possible.”

Leukemia Research Foundation CEO Shane Jacobson is proud to work with them to save lives and create hope for patients.” said V Foundation CEO Shane Jacobson.
From its inception, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has held Total Patient Care central to its mission. This philosophy, conceived by our founder, Sidney Farber, MD, involves comprehensive patient care that addresses more than just the physical burdens that accompany a cancer diagnosis. Farber believed that caring for the whole patient and their family, not just their disease, was key to revolutionizing the field of cancer medicine. Today, that philosophy is woven into the Institute’s core and serves as a model worldwide.

Since 2007, the kindness and philanthropy of Steve and Barbara Garfinkle have strengthened the Institute’s commitment to Total Patient Care with gifts to the Garfinkle Family Pediatric Assistance Fund at Dana-Farber. “The Garfinkles’ steadfast and incredibly generous support allows us to remove barriers to care,” says Joe Chabot, MS, director of the Pediatric Resource Program. “The Garfinkles’ steadfast and incredibly generous support allows us to remove barriers to care by providing help in the form of gas and grocery gift cards and grants to assist with essential household expenses.”

Dana-Farber researchers have well-documented the negative impact of financial strain on a child’s overall outcomes, and the Garfinkles’ are these children’s champions. Their long-term support helps to level the field for those with limited resources or who face new financial obstacles due to lost work, travel expenses, and childcare needs, among other examples. The Garfinkles’ passion for ensuring that families can more fully focus on what is truly important—the health of young patients—has made a tremendous difference in the lives of those served at Dana-Farber.

Meaningfully, upon Steve’s passing in 2021, Barbara dedicated a new gift of $685,000 in his memory to the Garfinkle Family Pediatric Assistance Fund to expand the Institute’s capacity to help families facing economic stressors related to a child’s medical care. Through this gift, Barbara not only helps families today, but enhances Steve’s legacy in a very special way.

“A legacy of generosity supports pediatric patient families

Since 2007, the Cambia Health Foundation has provided funding to organizations working to advance whole person health and build a more inclusive health care system. As part of this mission, the foundation recently named Dana-Farber’s Angela Feraco, MD, MMSc, and Tamryn Gray, PhD, RN, MPH, as Sojourn Scholars to advance their work in palliative care.

Feraco is focused on improving pediatric patients’ quality of life during treatment by promoting collaboration between pediatric palliative care teams and oncology care teams. With this funding, she will continue her study of the gaps in how these teams work and establish a critical pipeline of palliative care—recognizing that each family is unique, and as such, our research must uniquely tailor to their needs.”

“Over the past decade, Cambia Health Foundation has invested over $48 million to advance awareness and increase quality and access in palliative care. Strong leadership is needed to transform health care. Drs. Gray and Feraco’s innovative scholars projects have the capacity to translate their unique vision and passion into reality which will advance both whole person health and equity,” said Peggy Maguire, president of Cambia Health Foundation.

Liv Like a Unicorn makes magical gift

At just 8 years old, Olivia, “Liv” to her family and friends, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Her parents, Emma and Brian Lipnicky, comforted Liv as she underwent radiation, cheered her on as she regained strength, and guided her entrepreneurial spirit as she spent the summer organizing her own fundraiser for pediatric cancer research. Sadly, Liv’s tumor returned and spread, and she took her last breath in her mother’s arms in early November 2019. Shortly after, Emma and Brian created the Liv Like a Unicorn foundation, sweetly named for their girl.

Liv Like a Unicorn recently awarded Katherine Warren, MD, clinical director of Pediatric Neuro-Oncology at Dana-Farber, a $100,000 grant to support her DIPG All-In Initiative for pediatric brain tumors. Warren leads the initiative to coordinate DIPG studies in order to more efficiently and successfully advance therapeutics for DIPG, and establish a critical pipeline of therapeutic trials for this aggressive brain tumor.

“We are honored to partner with Dr. Warren in her research efforts,” said Emma, president and CEO of Liv Like a Unicorn. “This gift allows us to carry on Liv’s mission and help other families dealing with these devastating diagnoses.”

“The gift from Liv Like a Unicorn is exactly why I do the work I do,” said Warren. “This tumor has stolen too much from these children and families. It takes all of us, partnering together, to improve outcomes for these kids. The generosity, inspiration, and drive from foundations such as Liv Like a Unicorn keep us moving forward.”

A gift in memory of Steve Garfinkle will provide crucial financial assistance to Dana-Farber pediatric patients and families under the direction of Joe Chabot, MS (above).
Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation advances mission to change the lives of children with cancer through support for Dana-Farber

Starting with one lemonade stand in 2000, Alexandra “Alex” Scott’s brave and industrious spirit propelled her to raise $1 million toward a world without pediatric cancer before she passed away at age 8. Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) was established by her parents to continue Alex’s movement, and it has raised more than $250 million supporting innovative research and care for children diagnosed with cancer. Recent grant awards from ALSF totaling more than $1.2 million support Dana-Farber Cancer Institute investigators in pursuing cutting-edge research to address urgent needs in pediatric solid and blood cancers.

Mimi Bandopadhayay, MBBS, PhD, received the “A” Award Grant to pursue her research on different genetic changes that drive pediatric high-grade gliomas when they occur together with mutations to histone proteins. Bandopadhayay will use genomic methods to understand the mechanisms underlying these effects and the interplay of different histone mutations, with the goal of developing novel therapies for pediatric high-grade gliomas and applying the insights gained through this research across cancers.

Jessica Tsai, MD, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow in the Bandopadhayay lab, received a Young Investigator Award to build on her discovery that almost one in 10 diffuse intrinsic pontine gliomas have elevated levels of the FOXR2 protein. FOXR2 accelerates cancer growth and may have potential as a new target for cancer treatment. With this grant, Tsai will analyze how FOXR2 leads to cancer formation with an eye towards identifying treatments for these currently incurable brain tumors.

Two grants were awarded to Loren Walensky, MD, PhD, to support his efforts to advance next-generation therapies for treatment-resistant childhood cancers. The first will support work to move a triple-action agent known as a stapled peptide degrader from the laboratory to the bedside with the potential to target several cancer-driving pathways at once in a broad spectrum of pediatric cancers. The second will help Walensky continue developing stapled BH3 peptides to overcome resistance to venetoclax, a drug whose use is rapidly expanding in childhood and adult blood cancers to trigger cell death in tumor cells.

Co-funded by ALSF and the RUNX1 Foundation, an Early Career Investigator Grant was awarded to Wahyung Wang, MD, PhD, to support his study of how inflammatory proteins contribute to the immune response in blood cells lacking normal RUNX1 function. Wang is focusing on the protein NLRP3 to determine whether inhibiting its action could stop harmful inflammation and the development of blood cancers.

“Bringing hope to children diagnosed with cancer and their families requires dedication to research over many years,” said Liz Scott, co-executive director of ALSF. “This is why we believe in funding early career scientists as well as established investigators and why we continue partnering with Dana-Farber in pursuit of therapies that will be more innovative and impactful than ever before.”

Making Gray Matter Golf Classic surpasses $1 million raised for brain cancer research

The Making Gray Matter Golf Classic, hosted by the Gray Matters Brain Cancer Foundation, recently celebrated an incredible $1 million in total funds raised for Jimmy Fund Golf.

The Gray Matters Brain Cancer Foundation was established in 2010 by Brian and Katherine Stewart in honor of Brian’s sister, Jennifer, who was diagnosed with brain cancer that same year. She passed away in 2014, and her family has continued to raise funds and increase public awareness of brain cancer through various fundraising efforts.

The foundation’s annual golf tournament supports the brain cancer research of Rameen Berozhgha, MD, PhD, at Dana-Farber, whose work in cancer genomics is laying the groundwork for better treatments for brain cancer patients. The tournament’s steadfast support over 11 years has advanced this research to help garner in excess of $8 million in additional funding from the National Cancer Institute and others.

Above, golfers gathered at the Hamilton Farm Golf Club in Gladstone, N.J., last November to raise a record $150,000, bringing the tournament’s cumulative total to more than $1.1 million.

Team Jack Foundation funds research into pediatric brain cancer

Named for 16-year-old Jack Hoffman, a brain cancer survivor, the Team Jack Foundation supports cutting-edge research into pediatric brain cancer by awarding funding to the top cancer centers in the world. To that end, the foundation recently awarded nearly $240,000 to support the work of Dana-Farber’s Mimi Bandopadhayay, MBBS, PhD.

Bandopadhayay is working to uncover hidden drivers of pediatric low-grade gliomas (pLGG), one of the most common types of brain tumor diagnosed in children. This type of cancer follows a distinct clinical course, with periods of growth and stability during childhood followed by apparent dormancy when the patient reaches adulthood. Bandopadhayay aims to investigate this transition by utilizing whole-genome sequencing and analysis of patient-derived tumor samples.

“Perhaps the most unique characteristic among pLGGs relative to other cancers is that they become dormant upon adulthood,” said Bandopadhayay. “The reasons behind this change will indicate factors that encourage pLGG growth in children, and characterizing differences between tumors in adults and children are likely to expose the causes of this change. This funding enables us to move forward with identifying these ‘mystery drivers’ of tumor growth, which could inform treatment strategies for this disease.”

“We are honored and excited to be able to continue to support Dr. Bandopadhayay’s research,” said Kyle Dockter, executive director of the Team Jack Foundation. “We as a foundation deeply believe we can accomplish great things, but that does not happen without researchers like Dr. Bandopadhayay, who truly believe that a cure can be found for this awful disease.”
The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) has granted three Dana-Farber investigators a total of $1.35 million to support innovative research aimed at improving the diagnosis and treatment of breast and ovarian cancer.

With funding from MLSC’s Women’s Health Program, Elizabeth Mittendorf, MD, PhD, director of the Breast Immuno-Oncology Program and co-director of the Breast Cancer Clinical Research Program at Dana-Farber, is leveraging digital technologies to identify and cure high-risk breast cancer. In collaboration with an industry partner, Mittendorf is designing computer algorithms capable of identifying features in tumor biopsies and surgical specimens that can distinguish between high- and low-risk breast tumors.

“This project could lead to the development of new diagnostic and prognostic tools that will help us determine which patients are at greater risk of tumor recurrence after standard treatment and might benefit from a more aggressive therapeutic approach,” Mittendorf said. “I am extremely grateful to the MLSC for funding this work.”

Elizabeth Stover, MD, PhD, and Sara Tolaney, MD, MPH, chief of the Division of Breast Oncology within the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers, have each been awarded a Women’s Health Innovation grant.

Tolaney aims to determine how microbes in the intestines influence therapeutic responses in patients with breast cancer. Results from these experiments may reveal specific types of bacteria whose prevalence in the gut predict whether a patient will respond to a given therapy. The findings might also help researchers learn how to alter microbial populations in the gut to improve patient responses to breast cancer treatments.

In collaboration with Oliver Jonas, PhD, of Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Stover is using an implantable microdevice smaller than a grain of rice to measure drug responses in patients with ovarian cancer. The microdevice is designed to release up to 20 drugs into non-overlapping regions of tumor tissue. By implanting it directly into patients’ tumors and later analyzing the tumor tissues surrounding it, Stover can assess the anti-tumor activity of each drug. This novel technology could one day be used to optimize treatment in patients with ovarian cancer.

The MLSC’s multi-pronged mission is to serve as the hub of the world’s life sciences ecosystem; encourage innovation through investments in good science and business; strengthen and protect Massachusetts’ global leadership position in the life sciences; accelerate the commercialization of promising treatments, therapies, and cures that will improve patient care; create jobs; and drive economic and workforce development in science and technology. Its Women’s Health Initiative, launched in 2020, supports and incentivizes translational research focused on health challenges that predominantly affect women.

Kicks for Cancer supports ovarian cancer research

What started out as a gesture of love to support a friend during a difficult time quickly turned into an annual tradition to raise money and awareness for ovarian cancer research.

Kicks for Cancer started in 2007 when Ray Pavlik, head coach of the Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS) men’s varsity soccer team, sought a way to support assistant coach Steve Wells after his mother, Lois Wells, passed away from ovarian cancer. Pavlik rallied the team for a soccer game where CCHS players wore pink jerseys with “WELLS” on the back, to honor Steve’s mother. After raising $8,000, it was clear the event should become a tradition.

Nearly 15 years later, Kicks for Cancer is an annual 16-game soccer event with schools across Massachusetts raising money for ovarian cancer research and prevention.

In 2021, Kicks for Cancer had a record-breaking year, donating $116,000 to support Dipanjan Chowdhury, PhD, the Svanesberg Family Chair at Dana-Farber, whose lab investigates how human cells sense and repair DNA damage, as well as the causes and treatment of ovarian cancer.

“It’s amazing to see dozens of communities come together every year to raise money for Dana-Farber,” said Trish Siefer, chair, Kicks for Cancer. “We’re excited to see how Kicks continues to grow so we can make an even bigger impact towards cancer research.”

The Concord-Carlisle High School men’s varsity soccer team rallies together in the 2021 annual Kicks for Cancer soccer event.

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center has awarded $1.35 million to Elizabeth Mittendorf, MD, PhD; Elizabeth Stover, MD, PhD; and Sara Tolaney, MD, MPH, to support their research on women’s cancers.
Susan G. Komen renews longstanding support for Dana-Farber with over $2 million in grants

Since 1982, Susan G. Komen has invested critical resources into ground-breaking research, community health outreach, and advocacy, all in support of its mission to prevent and cure breast cancer. The organization has been a steadfast partner to Dana-Farber for over three decades, helping our investigators identify new ways to provide the best possible care to breast cancer patients.

Most recently, Susan G. Komen committed more than $2 million in grants to four faculty members who are spearheading a range of breast cancer studies at Dana-Farber: Jennifer Ligibel, MD; Elizabeth Mittendorf, MD, PhD; Heather Parsons, MD, MPH; and Nikhil Wagle, MD. Of these faculty members, Ligibel, Mittendorf, and Wagle are also members of the prestigious Komen Scholars program, an advisory group of distinguished leaders in breast cancer research and advocacy.

Ligibel, who serves as director of the Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living, is researching the impact of lifestyle factors on breast cancer risk and outcomes. With this generous funding from Susan G. Komen, Ligibel will be able to study the long-term effects of a weight loss program on metabolism, inflammation, and markers of breast cancer recurrence in women taking part in a phase 3 clinical trial. Specifically, Ligibel will test the impact of a weight loss intervention on the risk of disease recurrence in patients with early stage breast cancer.

Funds awarded to Mittendorf, who is director of the Breast Immunology-Oncology Program and co-director of the Breast Cancer Clinical Research Program at Dana-Farber, are supporting clinical trials testing the efficacy of immunotherapies in breast cancer. Mittendorf and her team are working to uncover why and how hormone receptor-positive breast cancers evade detection by the immune system in order to identify the best therapeutic strategies to overcome this phenomenon.

Parsons is exploring novel treatments for HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer. The standard approach for treating these patients is non-curative, but Parsons believes that a different, more personalized approach is needed for those whose cancer has only spread a limited amount since their initial diagnosis. With funding from Susan G. Komen, Parsons will use liquid biopsies to track minimal residual disease in the blood, which she hopes may guide curative treatment plans for this patient population.

Wagle conducts translational research in cancer genomics and cancer precision medicine, with a particular focus on metastatic breast cancer.

With this grant, Wagle and his laboratory seek to determine the causes of drug resistance in patients with this disease. Using genomic analysis, they aim to uncover whether resistance to targeted therapies involves cellular changes, and what those specific cellular changes are. This research could lead to improved therapies that can overcome resistance.

Donors support research to improve personalized therapy for ovarian cancer

To benefit future ovarian cancer patients, an anonymous couple—one of whom is a 10-year ovarian cancer survivor—has made a gift of $100,000 in support of new research under the direction of her oncologist, Ursula Matulonis, MD, chief of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology and the Brock-Wilson Family Chair at Dana-Farber.

A clinical trial is underway for ovarian cancer, treating patients with a personalized vaccine specifically designed from their own tumor cells. Used in conjunction with immunotherapy drugs known as checkpoint inhibitors, the vaccine helps steer the immune system to attack cancer cells.

While potentially lifesaving for some patients, this therapy may not be effective for everyone. Matulonis’ team will conduct correlative research to process the wealth of data from the clinical trial, understand the outcomes, and use their findings to improve treatment strategies for future trials.

“I’m alive because of research—without it, none of the treatments that kept me alive would exist,” says the donor, who was treated with an exceptionally strong cocktail of chemotherapies for her stage II-C ovarian cancer. The couple hopes their support will improve treatment options for all women. “This vaccine is the future. It’s another tool that Dana-Farber can use to fight this disease,” they say.

With an eye to their family’s future, the couple encouraged their daughter to undergo genetic testing and counseling at Dana-Farber after learning that one of them carries heritable gene mutations that elevate the risk of developing ovarian and breast cancers. They say, “When you know something, you can do something about it.”

Maureen Tracy Venti led a full, active, and compassionate life. A triathlete, a skier, a published poet, an artist, and a world traveler, Maureen didn’t let her stage IV ovarian cancer slow her down. Even the week she received her diagnosis—between tests and specialist appointments—she made time for a class of students who were scheduled to visit her studio.

This is how Maureen is remembered by Eddie Venti, her husband of 39 years. Eddie honored his wife by inscribing a tile in Dana-Farber’s Gene Display with words of her poetry, “My soul vibrates. Sing our memories. All of us here. For generations. Maureen Tracy Venti.”

Recently, Eddie was inspired after hearing about a clinical trial underway using a personalized therapeutic vaccine that could improve outcomes for patients with ovarian cancer. He made a gift to support new research informed by findings from the study, under the direction of Ursula Matulonis, MD, chief of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology. Eddie also joined the Dana-Farber Society by making provisions in his estate plans to support future research.

“The correlative research that Eddie and others are supporting helps us learn from the clinical trial,” said Matulonis, who is also the Brock-Wilson Family Chair at Dana-Farber. “Our team specializes in investigator-initiated research that examines why a therapy works for some patients and not others. This approach helps provide a map for us for future studies to benefit even more patients.”
**Defying brain cancer is a family effort**

Nolan Hsu, an otherwise healthy 30-year-old, started having odd auditory sensations in 2021, where multiple songs would play overlapping in his head. Knowing his body, Nolan spoke with his doctor and, after an MRI, was told these sensations had been auditory seizures. He had stage II oligodendroglioma, a brain tumor.

Nolan and his family quickly sought out Patrick Wen, MD, director of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Center for Neuro-Oncology. Thanks to the early stage of Nolan’s tumor and to his skilled team, his tumor was fully removed during a craniotomy. But Nolan and his family—his parents, Felix and Becky, his sister, Lauren, and his wife, Kate—were surprised by the lack of newer treatment options for tumors like his. Few therapies have been approved since the 1970s and no targeted therapies are currently available. They were motivated to start the Nolan Hsu Brain Cancer Research Fund with a $100,000 gift, to help Wen and his team find new avenues to treat this disease and help patients like Nolan.

“This fund is a family effort, and we’re all incorporating our hobbies and doing what we love to fundraise,” says Kate, who organized a dinner at her and Nolan’s favorite restaurant and a charity cycling class to raise funds, while Felix and Becky planned a pickleball event in Florida. “We are in this for the long run and really committed to finding a new treatment in the next 10 years.”

**St. Baldrick’s Fellow pursues new target for DIPG**

St. Baldrick’s Foundation funds the most promising cancer research focused on kids, and strives to close significant gaps in funding for pediatric cancers. A leading foundation in the field, St. Baldrick’s has exceeded $13 million awarded to Dana-Farber investigators over the past 13 years.

The foundation recently awarded Dana-Farber’s Jessica Tsai, MD, PhD, with a St. Baldrick’s Fellowship to support her investigation of a new potential therapeutic target in diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG)—a particularly devastating pediatric brain cancer in which the majority of patients die within the first year after diagnosis.

While examining genes that are turned on or off in DIPGs, Tsai discovered FOXR2, a gene that is not usually present in healthy brains but shows high levels in a subset of DIPGs. Tsai explains, “This is exciting because if we can target FOXR2 with new therapies, only tumor cells would be affected, sparing the normal brain cells.” Her project aims to uncover how FOXR2 makes DIPGs grow, and find ways to develop much-needed treatments for children with DIPG.

“We know the path to hope for kids with cancer is innovative research,” said Kathleen Ruddy, chief executive officer at St. Baldrick’s Foundation. “St. Baldrick’s guiding aim is the pursuit of outstanding research to ensure pediatric patients survive and thrive, and Dana-Farber is known for revolutionary research. Together, we are driving progress so kids with cancer can live longer, healthier lives.”

"Together, we are driving progress so kids with cancer can live longer, healthier lives.”

— KATHLEEN RUDDY, CEO, St. Baldrick’s Foundation
Pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) is the most common type of pancreatic cancer, accounting for more than 90% of diagnoses. Highly aggressive, the disease is difficult to treat with very limited therapeutic options. To help expedite the development of new treatments, the Lustgarten Foundation recently provided a $1.2 million grant to Dana-Farber’s David Pellman, MD, the Margaret M. Dyson Professor of Pediatric Oncology. The Lustgarten Foundation funds innovative and bold research that aligns with their mission to transform pancreatic cancer into a curable disease. This grant builds on the foundation’s two decades of significant support for Dana-Farber’s pioneering pancreatic cancer research, including previous support of Pellman’s PDAC studies. Since 2002, the Lustgarten Foundation has granted more than $14.5 million to Dana-Farber. “New therapeutic options are desperately needed for patients with this devastating disease,” said Pellman. “We are very grateful to the Lustgarten Foundation for supporting our efforts to understand the biology driving pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma and identify more effective treatments and approaches.”

PDAC is difficult to treat in part because it progresses at such a rapid pace. Scientists believe this is connected to the fact that PDAC genomes undergo large-scale, “catastrophic” rearrangements all at once rather than changing one mutation at a time. Pellman and his team have identified two specific events that cause pancreatic cells to undergo errors as they grow and divide, which they believe to be the source of the initial genome catastrophes that arise as PDAC progresses. With this support from the Lustgarten Foundation, Pellman and his team will further explore these two events and directly test their impact on PDAC progression.

Another obstacle to treating PDAC is that immunotherapies—treatments that help the immune system fight cancer—are not yet effective against the disease. Cancer immunotherapy has transformed outcomes for some patients with cancer, but the approach is currently effective for only about a quarter of cancer patients. Dramatically increasing the percentage of patients for whom immunotherapies are successful is a key priority of The Dana-Farber Campaign. This new Lustgarten Foundation grant will allow Pellman and his laboratory to test new strategies that might boost the efficacy of immunotherapies against this disease, potentially expanding the benefit of this treatment approach to patients with PDAC. “Dr. Pellman’s exciting immunotherapy project is precisely the kind of high-risk, high-reward research that has the potential to dramatically accelerate and expand lifesaving treatment options,” said Linda Tantawi, Lustgarten Foundation CEO. “The Lustgarten Foundation is committed to advancing the best science conducted by the best, most creative scientists in the field. Our longstanding partnership with and investment in Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is a testament to their exceptional research.”

“A gift inspired by compassion and innovation

As director of clinical research in the Division of Gastrointestinal Oncology at Dana-Farber, James Cleary, MD, PhD, specializes in researching and treating gastrointestinal cancers that don’t respond well to standard therapies. When Liza Gates’ mom, Grace, was diagnosed in 2005 with cholangiocarcinoma, a rare and aggressive form of bile duct cancer, Liza and her family experienced firsthand how Cleary’s special mix of compassion and innovation makes a difference in the lives of his patients.

The care Grace received, and the Dana-Farber research she benefited from, inspired Liza and Andrew Gates to establish The Grace Phyllis Cohen Fund for Bile Duct Cancer Research with funding of $100,000 to further Cleary’s work. “When my mom was diagnosed, we knew people with cholangiocarcinoma had a six-month life expectancy,” says Liza. “We were lucky to find it early, and only in her liver. But after a resection, her cancer came back. That’s when we connected with Dana-Farber.”

During Grace’s nine-and-a-half-year journey of cancer care, she developed a relationship with Cleary and the Dana-Farber staff that transcended the patient-provider relationship. “Cleany was so on top of research that he took whatever he thought would be valuable and used it to prolong her life without diminishing her quality of life,” says Liza. “Mom never felt like a number. Connections with the team helped her put her heart and soul into fighting the disease. That is incredibly rare.”

“This support has been a catalyst for our cholangiocarcinoma research and has already resulted in improving our understanding of targeted therapies in cholangiocarcinoma,” Cleary says. “We wouldn’t have been able to do this work without it.”

Lustgarten Foundation advances genomics and immunotherapy research for pancreatic cancer with $1.2 million grant

“Dr. Pellman’s exciting immunotherapy project is precisely the kind of high-risk, high-reward research that has the potential to dramatically accelerate and expand lifesaving treatment options.” — LINDA TANTAWI, CEO, Lustgarten Foundation

Become a Jimmy FundRaiser!

Start your own event and defy cancer with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund

A gift inspired by compassion and innovation

Liza Gates (right) with her mom, Grace.

Lustgarten Foundation advances genomics and immunotherapy research for pancreatic cancer with $1.2 million grant

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A gift inspired by compassion and innovation

Liza Gates (right) with her mom, Grace.
MacNaughts invest $1 million to establish fellowship in melanoma research

Melanoma research and advocacy has always been an important part of Malcolm and Emily “Luli” MacNaught’s lives. For many years, Luli worked with a South Shore nonprofit organization teaching children the warning signs of melanoma and the importance of sunscreen and sun protection. Then in 2000, she herself was diagnosed with melanoma, and this only made her passion for the cause stronger.

“My original melanoma didn’t look the way it usually looks in public service ads,” said Luli. “It doesn’t always present as a dark mole, so you have to know what to look for.”

Inspired to do more, the MacNaughts recently gave Dana-Farber $1 million to support a fellow focused on melanoma research under the direction of F. Stephen Hodi Jr., MD, director of the Melanoma Center and the Center for Immuno-Oncology, and the Sharon Crowley Martin Chair in Melanoma at Dana-Farber.

“Gifts like the MacNaughts’ help Dana-Farber attract and retain the best and brightest by giving them the funding they need so they can focus as much of their time as possible on advancing cutting-edge research and caring for patients. This is a key pillar of The Dana-Farber Campaign: bolstering the Institute’s investment in exceptional expertise—the clinicians and researchers who make Dana-Farber the world-renowned center of innovation that it is.”

Luli originally met Hodi through her work with melanoma patients and upon meeting him, she became excited about the research and successes taking place at Dana-Farber. She and Malcolm were both impressed by Hodi’s expertise. Luli also agreed to participate in an ongoing melanoma research study. “It’s wonderful to get in on the ground floor of these studies and help future patients,” she said.

Over the years, the MacNaughts have given more than $6 million in funding to Dana-Farber. This latest gift provides valuable resources to help young investigators launch their careers, ensuring that the next generation of leaders at Dana-Farber have the tools they need to find new methods of treating this disease.

“After so many years of supporting Dr. Hodi, we’ve seen research working and people living longer with melanoma,” said Malcolm. “Establishing a fellowship was important to us, and we wanted to keep up that momentum by helping Dana-Farber attract the very best, most talented young people.”

“This endowed fellowship will make a world of difference for early career investigators, because it frees up their time to focus on research and care instead of struggling to find funding to cover their salaries and lab supplies,” said Hodi. “We have made incredible advancements in treating melanoma over the years, and the MacNaughts’ investments in our researchers have been a crucial part of that progress. I am very grateful for their continued support.”

Center for BRCA and Related Genes gets a boost

Breast cancer runs in Marla Freethling’s family. Given this family history, at 18, Marla underwent genetic testing and learned that she is BRCA1 positive, just like her mother. Three years later, Marla made the difficult decision to undergo a double mastectomy as a preventative measure.

In the years since her procedure, Marla and her husband, Kevin Seth, have become passionate advocates for BRCA research and awareness.

“It impacts more people than you think. Every time I share my story, I hear of someone else who has been affected by BRCA, too,” said Marla. “We want to do anything we can to give people more options for prevention and early detection.”

With this inspiration, the couple advocated for the Chris and Irene Seth Family Foundation to make a generous gift of $150,000 to support Dana-Farber’s Center for BRCA and Related Genes, which was launched in 2020 as the first of its kind dedicated to the care for, prevention of, and research into BRCA-related cancers.

“Gifts to the center help accelerate our progress in developing more effective treatments and early detection tools for cancers, both from inherited genes like BRCA and patients with family history that may not have an identified genetic mutation,” said Panos Konstantinopoulos, MD, PhD, the center’s director as well as director of Translational Research in Gynecologic Oncology at Dana-Farber. “Dana-Farber is a place where we knew the funds would be spent wisely,” said Kevin. “BRCA research needs a lot of support, and we believe that it deserves a lot more attention.”

Scragg Family’s gift expands Lynch syndrome research and care

Lynch syndrome (LS) is a hereditary condition that increases one’s risk of developing a variety of cancers, and everyone in David and Lori Scragg’s family who has Lynch syndrome has indeed developed cancer. In May 2021 their 35-year-old son, Mark, was diagnosed with LS-gastric cancer. After a poor response from doctors near their home in Canada, they met Matthew Yurgelun, MD, director of the Lynch Syndrome Center Registry and Biobank, under the direction of Yurgelun and Sapna Konstantinou, MD, MPH, founder of the Lynch Syndrome Center and director of research in the Center for Cancer Genetics and Prevention.

With this inspiration, the couple advocated for the Seth Family Foundation to make a generous gift of $150,000 to support Dana-Farber’s Lynch Syndrome Center Registry and Biobank, under the direction of Yurgelun and Sapna Konstantinou, MD, MPH, founder of the Lynch Syndrome Center and director of research in the Center for Cancer Genetics and Prevention.

The Scraggs feel very fortunate to have found Dana-Farber and hope their support will help future families receive the screening and specialized care they need. “There is one word that comes to mind when I think about Dana-Farber and that is hope,” said David. “That hope made all the difference for our family,” added Lori. “I am very grateful for David and Lori’s generosity,” said Yurgelun. “It will expand our biobank collection and ensure patients with Lynch syndrome who develop upper gastrointestinal cancers are getting the best care possible.”

The Scraggs feel very fortunate to have found Dana-Farber and hope their support will help future families receive the screening and specialized care they need. “There is one word that comes to mind when I think about Dana-Farber and that is hope,” said David. “That hope made all the difference for our family,” added Lori. “I am very grateful for David and Lori’s generosity,” said Yurgelun. “It will expand our biobank collection and ensure patients with Lynch syndrome who develop upper gastrointestinal cancers are getting the best care possible.”

Marla Freethling and Kevin Seth are supporting BRCA research at Dana-Farber in the hopes of giving people more options for treatment and prevention.
William Raveis Ride + Walk raises funds for cancer research

William Raveis Real Estate employees started fundraising in 2004 as a personal way to show support for co-workers with cancer, and today they raise money for oncology research across New England, New York, and Florida. Every September their largest event, the William Raveis Ride + Walk, brings together employees, their families, and friends in Norwalk, Conn., for a 5K walk or bicycle rides of 12 or 25 miles. In 2021 they named Dana-Farber as a beneficiary, giving $125,000 for research led by Nobel Laureate William G. Kaelin Jr., MD, the Sidney Farber, MD, Professor of Medicine.

This gift supports research that builds on the discovery by Kaelin and his team that existing thalidomide-like drugs can kill myeloma cells by degrading proteins previously thought “undruggable.” They are now studying whether these medicines can destroy two key undruggable proteins that many cancers need to proliferate.

“If we succeed, this could be a gamechanger,” said Kaelin, “and create a new playbook for disarming other cancer-causing proteins that were previously thought to be untouchable with conventional drugs.”

The mission is more personal than ever. While William “Bill” Raveis and his family have always been proud of their firm’s charitable efforts, the importance of research particularly hit home when close family members developed cancer.

“We’ve seen firsthand that the science changes constantly,” said Meghan Raveis, managing director of the William Raveis Charitable Fund. “We’ve seen many stories where even with a difficult prognosis, progression can be managed while new therapies emerge—it makes such a difference.”

Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation fosters discovery in basic science

Continuing their long legacy of giving to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation recently honored Edward Chouchani, PhD, in Dana-Farber’s department of Cancer Biology, with its esteemed Odyssey Award. As a recipient, Chouchani received a two-year, $300,000 grant to pursue his research focused on the impact of metabolites on regulation of physiological process in tissues. The Odyssey Award was launched in 2017 to fuel innovation and drive high-reward pilot projects in the important field of basic science.

“We are proud to fuel the pivotal work of Dr. Chouchani through our Odyssey Award program,” said Amy Smith Berylson, Trustee of both the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation and Dana-Farber. “We are committed to supporting the fundamental discovery science of early career investigators that will lead to the breakthroughs of tomorrow.”

This grant will allow Chouchani and his lab to leverage newfound mechanisms to develop novel therapies for metabolic, inflammatory, and metastatic diseases. They will apply mass spectrometry and biochemical approaches to understand how metabolites regulate cellular function in pre-clinical models of health and disease. With critical support from visionaries like the Smith Family Foundation, Chouchani and his team can press forward with their research.

“On behalf of everyone in our lab, we are deeply appreciative of the support from the Smith Family Foundation,” said Chouchani. “Their commitment to funding unorthodox projects brings renewed energy and focus to this important work.”

NCC supports basic science research at Dana-Farber

Jiao Li, PhD, is working to identify a new therapeutic target in translocation renal cell carcinoma (tRCC), a highly aggressive subtype of kidney cancer for which there are currently no approved therapies. Her research into the PKD1L2 gene aims to lay the groundwork for future clinical trials.

Varadha Balaji Venkadakrishnan, PhD, is studying a mechanism of treatment resistance called lineage plasticity, which is seen in up to 20% of late-stage prostate cancers. He aims to pinpoint precisely how prostate cancer changes its identity during treatment resistance, which could help inform novel treatment strategies.

“As executive director of National Cancer Center, it has been my honor to be able to fund young scientists to do their work in basic research,” said Regina English of NCC. “It has always been difficult for them to secure funding from other private, governmental, and institutional funders. NCC is proud and thrilled to fill that critical gap by supporting Dana-Farber’s brilliant researchers.”

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*As a benefit to our donors, when eligible Massachusetts residents donate $50 or more to Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund, they may receive 6% off their Arbella auto policy.
Estate of Peter Pricone provides flexible support to the Institute

Peter Pricone was many things to many people—an adventurous traveler and expert skier, an entrepreneur with a gift for math and finances, an honest and loyal friend. To the Dana-Farber community, he will also be remembered as a generous philanthropist who enabled further progress in cancer research and care.

Peter passed away in April 2019 after 13 months of treatment for acute myeloid leukemia. Grateful for the care he received at Dana-Farber, he left a substantial bequest to the Institute. These funds will provide flexible support for research and care initiatives throughout Dana-Farber, from innovative basic research, to expanding access to clinical trials, to programs that enhance the Institute’s signature Total Patient Care.

“My brother was very generous, and leaving a legacy to cancer research was meaningful for him,” said Diane Pricone-Recardo, Peter’s sister. “He was always thinking of others, always saying, ‘Let me try to help other people.’ It’s just who he was.”

Diane notes that generosity runs in the family—her mother, who passed away just one year before Peter, instilled in her two children how important it is to give back. “I was shocked to lose Peter so soon after our mother, but I know he felt he was receiving his treatments at the best place for cancer,” said Diane. “Giving this money to Dana-Farber meant he could help many more people who come after him.”

Grateful patient makes gift to support lung cancer research

When speaking with George Denny, he will tell you that he is not a scientist. However, this did not deter Denny from making a generous gift of $100,000 to establish the Michael Seth Rabin, MD, Fund in support of lung cancer research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute under the direction of Michael S. Rabin, MD.

“As a Dana-Farber patient, I was most moved by Dr. Rabin as a clinician—he was very personable and thoughtful,” said Denny. “Later, I learned about his research and was very impressed. I hope that this gift will allow Dr. Rabin and his colleagues to continue their work trying to find markers and characteristics in lung cancer to enhance treatments for patients.”

Rabin is the principal investigator of the Lung Clinical Research Information System (CRIS), which allows investigators to access and store patient-derived tumor and blood sample data. The patients’ clinical data allow doctors to learn how different tumor mutations influence treatment outcomes.

“I am so appreciative of George’s generosity,” said Rabin. “This gift will give me and my team the flexibility to pursue the most promising research ideas and accelerate bold studies that will pave the way for pivotal breakthroughs.”

As a patient himself, Denny hopes his contribution will make a difference for other patients with cancer. Denny said, “Dr. Rabin is part of a team that is saving lives. I am just glad that I am able to help make an impact.”

Swim Across America supports survivorship

Since 1996, Swim Across America has partnered with Dana-Farber to raise money and awareness for cancer research through a variety of swim-related events. In 2020, for the first time in this 26-year partnership, the decision was made to forego the Boston Swim Across America event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In summer 2021 the event returned, to a new venue: Pleasure Bay at Castle Island. This allowed more swimmers of all ages and abilities to participate in the event safely, and resulted in a total of $120,000 raised for the pediatric survivorship program at Dana-Farber.

This gift funds, in entirety, a yearly fellowship under the leadership of Christopher Recklitis, PhD, MPH, director of research at the Perini Family Survivors’ Center. This fellowship supports research to understand survivorship care—specifically, to increase our understanding of late effects of cancer treatments, develop less toxic treatments as well as interventions to mitigate lasting effects, and improve the health of more than 500,000 survivors of pediatric cancer. Recently, Swim Fellows initiated Project REACH to study and understand the experiences of children and young adults with cancer through a developmental lens, with the goal of providing more comprehensive care and support to patients.

“We are incredibly proud of our partnership with Dana-Farber and the direct funding of fellowships that our philanthropy provides,” said Jessica Stokes of Swim Across America.
Anonynous gift accelerates bold research for lung cancer

While more cancer research creates better treatments and outcomes, such research is chronically underfunded in lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer-related death in the U.S. Philanthropy is therefore crucial to filling this gap in which too many lives are lost. Inspired by this need and by the care they received at Dana-Farber, an anonymous couple recently made a generous gift to accelerate innovative lung cancer investigations led by Bruce Johnson, MD, co-director of the Center for Cancer Genomics. Recognizing that life-changing treatments spring from high-risk, high-reward studies, the donors hope their seed funding helps Johnson and his colleagues to pursue bold ideas that may precipitate the next breakthrough.

Johnson has seen the power of such philanthropy at work in the development of novel immunotherapies and targeted treatments, which have contributed to the rapid decrease in lung cancer deaths over the past two decades. He and his Dana-Farber colleagues have played a pivotal role in this progress through seminal discoveries in lung cancer genomics that helped shift the paradigm of care toward personalized medicine. Johnson said: “We are deeply grateful for our donors, whose generosity empowers us to drive greater advances more quickly than would otherwise be possible.”

For their part, the anonymous couple trusts Johnson and his colleagues to make the most of their investment. “It is our privilege to support research that can ultimately save more lives,” they said. “And to give back to our care team at Dana-Farber that gave us such hope.”

Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer fuels the next generation

The incorporation of PD-1 pathway inhibitors in the first-line treatment of metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) has recently revolutionized treatment for these patients. But because only a subset of NSCLCs will respond to immunotherapy, the identification of biomarkers that predict benefit from PD-1 inhibitors is of critical importance and is the center of Riciucci’s research.

“This grant from SITC can help develop new treatment strategies aimed at improving lung cancer outcomes,” said Ricciuti. “I’m honored to be a recipient of the SITC Fellowship Award and am grateful for the opportunity to advance research in this area.”

“We’re committed to investing in the next generation of leaders in immunology and immunotherapy,” said Patrick Hwu, MD, president, SITC. “We’re thrilled to support Dr. Ricciuti’s approach to response and resistance to immunotherapies in NSCLC through our fellowship award.”

Riney Foundation continued from page 1

clinical research at the Lipper Center and the R.J. Corman Professor of Medicine.

“My family and I feel grateful to be able to support Ken, Paul, and Nikhil and their teams at Dana-Farber who are making incredible inroads,” said Riney. “We are humbled by the lifelong dedication that they bring to myeloma patients suffering from this terrible disease. We hope this gift will inspire others to also support the tremendous work happening every day in Dana-Farber’s labs and clinics.”

A legacy of leadership

The Rineys have a strong legacy of supporting multiple myeloma research at Dana-Farber and in 2019 gave a $16.5 million gift to establish the Riney Family Multiple Myeloma Initiative, which has driven groundbreaking research in record time. Examples of recent discoveries by Dana-Farber investigators include:

• Bringing therapeutic antibodies, which help immune cells find and attack tumors, to patients with multiple myeloma.
• Setting the stage for the development of innovative therapies that exploit the unique vulnerabilities of multiple myeloma cells.

Over the past two years, the Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation also made gifts totaling $2.6 million to establish the Riney Family Fund for COVID-19 and Multiple Myeloma Research at Dana-Farber, under Richardson’s direction.

These commitments provide powerful momentum for The Dana-Farber Campaign, an ambitious multi-year $2 billion fundraising effort to prevent, treat, and defy cancer by accelerating revolutionary science, extraordinary care, exceptional expertise, and essential opportunities.

“The Riney Family are generous and stalwart supporters, and through this grant and their previous support they continue to make a profound impact on scientific discovery and clinical care.”

— LAURE H. GLIMCHER, MD, president and CEO, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Anonymous gift accelerates bold research for lung cancer

James and Jennifer Mock have been impacted by cancer enough to know that time is precious. Thankful for the extra time James had with his mother, Kristina, while she was treated at Dana-Farber, the Mocks have dedicated $125,000 to researchers who are working to deliver lifesaving treatments to patients.

“Every single day matters,” says James. “Each additional day I had with my mother was wonderful and that’s what we hope to give to everyone.”

The Mock Family Fund for Lung Cancer Research supports the research of Paul Janné, MD, PhD, director of the Carole M. and Philip L. Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology; the Robert and Renée Belfer Center for Applied Cancer Science, and the Chen-Huang Center for EGFR Mutant Lung Cancers.

“Philanthropy provides us with the flexibility and funding to accelerate research that may not otherwise move forward,” says Janné. “Thanks to the Mocks’ gift, we will make meaningful strides in uncovering the biology of lung cancers, enhance strategies for early detection and prevention, and speed the delivery of treatments to patients.”

The Mocks’ commitment to Dana-Farber was reinforced when their nephew, Colton, was diagnosed with Burkitt lymphoma and leukemia in 2019. Jennifer shares that he is doing well, thanks to the expertise of his care team.

“Cancer is scary and overwhelm- ing,” she says. “But when you walk into Dana-Farber, you just have this feeling. ’Okay, I’m in the right place.’”

Anonymous gift accelerates bold research for lung cancer

Mockson give the gift of time to patients and families

Jamesy and Jennifer Mock, pictured above with their children, support the lung cancer research of Paul Janné, MD, PhD, to honor family members’ battles with multiple cancers.

James and Jennifer Mock

Dana-Farber received an anonymous gift to accelerate innovative lung cancer research led by Bruce Johnson, MD.
Since its founding in 1948, the Jimmy Fund has raised millions of dollars for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute through grassroots efforts. Here are a few ways Jimmy Fund supporters came together this year to raise vital funds to defy cancer.

Freezin’ for a Reason

On New Year’s Day, swimmers from Freezin’ for a Reason—a group of employees from XS Brokers in Quincy, Mass.—leaped icy waters in South Boston to fundraise for the Jimmy Fund. The L. Street Brownies, one of the oldest polar bear clubs in the nation, has been organizing swims for more than a century. The Brownies are best known for their annual New Year’s Day dip in Dorchester Bay, attracting hundreds of participants to take the plunge, and 2022 was the first year that Freezin’ for a Reason joined the frosty festivities. The group’s inaugural plunge was organized by XS Brokers’ staff member Jenney Foley in memory of loved ones lost to cancer, including her colleague’s wife, Bobbie Jo Constantz. Funds raised by the adventurers were triple matched by XS Brokers thanks to CEO Adam Devine, which brought the group’s fundraising total to $80,086. “Everyone has either been touched by cancer or knows someone who courageously fights it,” said Devine. “We were pleased to put this fundraiser together in memory of Bobbie Jo. She always had a beautiful smile, funny wit, and a grounded outlook in life—she will be missed.”

Aubuchon Hardware

With more than 100 stores in New England and upstate New York, Aubuchon Hardware is the oldest family-owned and managed hardware store chain in America. The company has a long history of helping the communities it serves by giving back to numerous charitable causes and community organizations. From March 1 to 31, Aubuchon held its annual “Hammer Away Cancer” campaign to raise critical funding for Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund. Retail locations asked customers to round up their purchase at the register, donating the difference to Dana-Farber. The month-long event ran in all Aubuchon stores and raised $80,000 in flexible funds to help improve outcomes for patients and families. “We are proud to once again participate in the ‘Hammer Away Cancer’ campaign,” said Aubuchon Vice President of Marketing Mike Mattson. “It’s so rewarding for Aubuchon employees to team up with our generous customers in support of the revolutionary science and extraordinary patient care happening at Dana-Farber.”

Normandy Farms

Normandy Farms in Foxborough, Mass., has welcomed families to its luxury camping resort for more than 50 years. Since 1983, the Daniels Family, who owns the campground, has been raising money for Dana-Farber, both in honor of guests who have stayed on the property while traveling to Boston for cancer treatment, and on behalf of everyone with a personal cancer connection. Each year, the resort holds a variety of fundraising events onsite, including a mid-summer Halloween Walk, a casino night, and an ice cream social. In 2021, as a new generation of the Daniels family stepped into managing the facility, Normandy Farms celebrated its anniversary with an incredible $50,000 gift to Dana-Farber. The gift, in conjunction with the funds raised by guests over the years, brings Normandy Farms’ cumulative giving to more than $400,000. “Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund help so many people who struggle with cancer,” said Normandy Farms Recreation Director Doris Daniels. “We are happy to contribute with the donations we’ve raised and look forward to developing new ideas to generate more support in the future.”

Pool for Jimmy

Last December, 32 teams from the New England Women’s Pool Alliance came together to run the table in Pool for Jimmy, a Scotch Doubles 9-ball pool tournament in Plainview, N.Y. Organized by Catherine “Katie” Fiorilla and Sam Barrett, the Alliance recruited pool players from all over New England, opened the tournament up to men, and specifically selected players with a personal cancer connection. With the help of local billiards organizations, sponsors, and dedicated pool players, Pool for Jimmy exceeded its fundraising goal, racking up more than $32,000 for cancer care and research. “We didn’t know how much the Pool for Jimmy event would raise, but the Dana-Farber website is very clear about what smaller donations can do,” said Katie and Sam. “It was so motivating to think about how our fundraiser might improve the quality of life for patients.”

Dana-Farber and Jimmy Fund supporters host unique grassroots fundraising events, indoors and out

Swimmers from Freezin’ for a Reason took part in a polar plunge on New Year’s Day to raise funds for Dana-Farber.

One of the many fundraising events organized by Normandy Farms was a casino night for guests.
10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission.
BASEBALL SEASON
NEW! Strike Out Cancer Pledge Campaign
You can make each win for the Red Sox a win for the Jimmy Fund! Sign up at any point in the season to donate an amount of your choosing for each Red Sox win to help the Jimmy Fund strike out cancer, and be eligible for exciting incentives like exclusive T-shirts, and Red Sox experiences. Visit PledgeIt.org/JimmyFund or contact Teresa Kane at StrikeOutCancer@dfci.harvard.edu.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED
Boston Red Sox pitcher Nathan Eovaldi is back for a second year as our Jimmy Fund Captain in 2022, helping to support and promote Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund’s mission to defy cancer. “I am thrilled and honored to continue serving as Jimmy Fund Captain,” said Eovaldi. “I look forward to raising awareness and funds for a cause that I, and the entire Red Sox organization, hold so close.” The Red Sox have partnered with the Jimmy Fund since 1953, the longest and most successful charitable partnership in professional sports.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
For more information on all Jimmy Fund and Dana-Farber events and programs, go to JimmyFund.org or Dana-Farber.org

ALL SUMMER
PMC Kids Rides
Many kids, many bikes. Kids of all ages find fun, camaraderie, and inspiration in bringing us closer by the mile to the cure for cancer with donations to the PMC, benefiting Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Join a ride or start a ride in your neighborhood! Learn more or sign up at Kids.PMC.org.

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THANKING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

For more exciting events go to page 19!